

Today's News - Tuesday, July 8, 2014

- ArcSpace brings us eyeful of 10 cool things to see in Berlin.
- Kimmelman offers an eye-opening look at how a sprawling Syrian refugee camp in Jordan is evolving into "an informal city - with an economy and even gentrification" that "aid workers say can be potential urban incubators that benefit host countries," and "points more broadly to a whole new way of thinking about one of the most pressing crises on the planet."
- Baku may be "basking" in the attention because of Hadid's Heydar Aliyev center, but "urban renewal often comes with a high human toll. Some believe the government should be paying more attention to people, than places."
- Lamster ponders Dallas's "penchant for brazen works of kitschy historicism - you will find developer kitsch kudzuing all over the city."
- Davies cheers a new app that lets you see then-and-now views of Melbourne building sites, but bemoans what he discovers: "is this all we've got to show for it? It's dismaying to think such magnificent assets were traded away for so little" (indeed!).
- Pogrebin delves into a few more details about Gene Kaufman's offer to "buy and preserve" Rudolph's Orange County Government Center ("buy" is not exactly how it sounds to us - and a few other quibbles we won't get into).
- Rosenblum presents a fascinating history of an exquisite, though long-abandoned 19th-century hospice in Jaffa, and its transformation into a hip W hotel (at least in Pawson's hands, there's hope for much of its grandeur).
- Rhode Island's "grande dame" of hotels, once slated for demolition, "is once again the crown jewel - and point of civic pride - of Watch Hill" (we can be packed and ready to go in five minutes!).
- In Malta, Ian Ritchie has grand plans for an office park that "represents a wonderful opportunity to highlight the importance of regenerating Mriehel, while making use of exceptional industrial heritage structures."
- Sweet is sweet on the idea of the Obama Library making its home on Lake Michigan shore: the site (offered free) may be "higher risk, but comes with more reward: to build an Obamaville from scratch, a high-tech, green model community. What happens in Lakeside is important to the future of the city. It is the largest piece of empty land left in Chicago."
- Hawthorne has second - and third - thoughts about Zumthor's updated vision for LACMA, "stretched like a piece of black bubble gum across Wilshire Boulevard. Does the design fetishize car culture?" (perhaps "the architect's basic reading of Los Angeles could use an update").
- Cheers for the Chicago Design Museum finally finding a home on Block 37 (a Kickstarter success story; alas, no mention anywhere of who actually designed it).
- Zandberg eloquently zaps Koolhaas's Biennale: "architects worldwide anticipated a new and lively agenda. But after viewing the grueling main exhibition...we are left with no alternative other than to take a good look at the whole prestigious enterprise itself, which has been showing signs of fatigue in recent years."
- Sperber, on the other hand, is left fairly dreamy about the whole thing, "liminal space between the individual and the world, between ego and reality" included (very Remsian).
- Heathcote is heartened by a few emerging trends in airport design that go beyond "carefully wrought metaphors of wings and flight" that "all end up feeling pretty much the same anyway" (i.e. a "generic mega-mall look").
- Moore parses the ascension of Assemble from pop-ups "to works of greater size and social impact. The question is to see how far they can go from here."
- New vocabulary to add to our lexicon of business terms as Aedas announces its "conscious uncoupling": it has "demerged" into the two companies (with "no animosity behind the split" - but who gets to keep the cat?).
- Call for entries: RFQ: International Architecture Design Competition for Guangzhou Science Museum + Deadline reminder: \$100,000 Moriayama RAIC International Prize for a single work of architecture.

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10 Things to See in Berlin: Berlin has many things - but above all, it has history. Layer upon layer of history. In fact, no other city has the 20th century's European history encased in its urban fabric like the German capital. -- Gehry Partners; David Chipperfield Architects; Daniel Libeskind; Dominique Perrault; Sergei Tchoban & Sergei Kuznetsov; Eisenman Architects; OMA; Snøhetta; Aldo Rossi; Richard Rogers Partnership (Rogers Stirk Harbour & Partners) [images]

Refugee Camp for Syrians in Jordan Evolves as a Do-It-Yourself City: As the sprawling Zaatari camp evolves into an informal city — with an economy and even gentrification — aid workers say camps can be potential urban incubators that benefit host countries like Jordan...points more broadly to a whole new way of thinking about one of the most pressing crises on the planet..."it's a dynamic place, unforeseen by the humanitarian actors running it..." By Michael Kimmelman -- Ennead Architects - New York Times

Baku Basks in Architectural Attention: ...as a center of cutting-edge architectural design thanks in part to a major award given recently to Zaha Hadid for her Heydar Aliyev center...The Azerbaijani capital's new look has plenty of local fans, but also some detractors...Also in progress is the "White City," an urban renewal project that aims to transform one of the city's grimiest areas...Urban renewal often comes with a high human toll...Some believe the government should be paying more attention to people, than places. -- Norman Foster/Foster + Partners; Novruz Eldarly/ENEL architectural; Elchin Aliyev- EurasiaNet.org

Kitsch Dallas: Why is the city of the future stuck in the past? Dallas Baptist's audacious pastiche [is] hardly an anomaly...Perhaps because the city is at once so insecure about its history and yet so bent on prestige, it has often looked elsewhere for architectural validation. This has brought trophy buildings by architects of international reputation along with a penchant for brazen works of kitschy historicism...you will find developer kitsch kudzuing all over the city. By Mark Lamster [images]- Dallas Morning News

Lost heritage: is this all we've got to show for it? Australian cities lost many magnificent heritage buildings to demolition over the last 100 years; in too many cases we've got far too little today to show for the losses...new iPhone/iPad app developed by the State Library of Victoria, Street History: Hoddle's Grid...it's dismaying to think such magnificent assets were traded away for so little. By Alan Davies [images, links]- Crikey (Australia)

Rethinking a Spurned Landmark: An architect with experience restoring a Brutalist building designed by Paul Rudolph is making a proposal to buy and preserve another Rudolph building under threat in Goshen, N.Y...Orange County Government Center would be turned into a center for artists, exhibitions and community meetings. By Robin Pogrebin -- Gwathmey Siegel Kaufman Architects - New York Times

Once a hospice, soon a luxury hotel: A Jaffa story: On a site where medical services were once provided free of charge, the W Tel Aviv-Jaffa hotel is designed for the rich...the building is a prime example of human generosity and compassion – the present preservation and expansion are motivated entirely by market forces...What will make the hotel unique is the old building...has been extremely slow to take shape — both because of bureaucracy and due to archaeological discoveries...

By Keshet Rosenblum -- Ribell and Grebez (1885); John Pawson/Ramy Gill; Anna Shipman; Arco Planning, Preservation and Restoration [images]- Ha'aretz (Israel)

Queen of the Hill: A Grande Dame Hotel Is Reborn in Rhode Island: When a storied summer playground for the East Coast's elite was slated for demolition, Charles Royce made a promise to restore it to its former glory. Today, the Ocean House is once again the crown jewel—and point of civic pride—of Watch Hill. -- Jeff Riley/Centerbrook Architects [slide show]- Condé Nast Traveler

Initial Farsons Business Park Masterplan presented to board of directors: ...development and transformation of the iconic Old Brewhouse and former Packaging Halls..."represents a wonderful opportunity to highlight the importance of regenerating Mriehel, while making use of exceptional industrial heritage structures..." -- Ian Ritchie Architects [images]- Malta Independent

Bid for Obama Library on Lake Michigan shore: Lakeside is higher risk, but comes with more reward: to build an Obamaville from scratch, a high-tech, green model community...offering the Barack Obama Foundation free land...What happens in Lakeside is important to the future of the city. It is the largest piece of empty land left in Chicago. By Lynn Sweet -- Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM)- Chicago Sun-Times

Peter Zumthor's L.A.-LACMA vision in need of update: The more I think about the plan's newly attenuated form, stretched like a piece of black bubble gum across Wilshire, the more I wonder if the architect's basic reading of Los Angeles could use an update...to judge from the new version...and the enthusiasm it shows for framing views of car traffic...It has more to do with the Los Angeles of his SCI-Arc days...than the 21st century city. By Christopher Hawthorne- Los Angeles Times

Good design finds home at Block 37: ...it makes sense that there's finally a permanent, local museum dedicated to the study and preservation of design concepts...with the culmination of a successful \$50,000 Kickstarter campaign, The Chicago Design Museum (ChiDM) has a home and is churning the local economy by selling locally sourced design curiosities in the gift shop... -- Tanner Woodford- Chicago Sun-Times

Venice Biennale can't match grandeur of the city itself: Rem Koolhaas had big plans...but his 'Elements of Architecture' doesn't build on the hype...architects worldwide anticipated a new and lively agenda. But after viewing the grueling main exhibition...it became clear that, this time too, the Biennale had no new tidings for the world of architecture...we are left with no alternative other than to take a good look at the whole prestigious enterprise itself, which has been showing signs of fatigue in recent years... By Esther Zandberg- Ha'aretz (Israel)

Op-Ed: From (EX)CITE to (IN)CITE, reflecting on Rem's Biennale: Rem Koolhaas...managed to excite us, again forcing us to rethink the Elements and Fundamentals of architecture... this is the first time I felt a real desire to visit the show, which I have always imagined to be more like an amusement park for new design. By Esther Sperber/Studio ST Architects-Architect

Plight of the concourse: Airport architecture is a conundrum: no matter how good it is, users want to leave as soon as possible. A slew of new openings points beyond the generic mega-mall look...All the carefully wrought metaphors of wings and flight...all end up feeling pretty much the same anyway...The question, then, is what should architects do? ...emerging trends. By Edwin Heathcote -- Luis Vidal; Foster & Partners; Grimshaw; Massimiliano Fuksas; Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM); J Mayer H.; UNStudio [images]- Financial Times (UK)

From pop-ups to grown-ups: ...Assemble first caught the eye with their 2010 pop-up cinema Cineroleum. Now their inspiring improvised architecture is helping to drive social change...In Dalmarnock, Glasgow...revived the post-war idea of the adventure playground, as a response to the "boredom and exclusions" of children living in urban areas...in a short time...succeeded in progressing from the amuse-bouche of the Cineroleum to works of greater size and social impact. The question is to see how far they can go from here. By Rowan Moore [slide show]- Observer (UK)

Aedas announces 'conscious uncoupling': UK architect to split from Hong Kong arm and rebrand as AHR...no animosity behind the split...will see the world's fifth-biggest architect (by architects employed) effectively demerge into the two companies, Hong Kong-based LPT and UK firm Abbey Holford Rowe, that joined together to form Aedas in 2002. The rest of the group, operating out of Hong Kong, will remain as Aedas. - BD/Building Design (UK)

Call for entries: Request for Qualifications/RFQ: International Architecture Design Competition for Guangzhou Science Museum; registration deadline: July 25- Guangzhou Municipality Bureau of Science and Information Technology & Bureau of Urban Planning

Call for entries deadline reminder: Moriyama RAIC International Prize for a single work of architecture; \$100,000 (Canadian) prize; deadline: August 1- Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC)

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